



CITY OF DURHAM | NORTH CAROLINA

Date: July 7, 2015

To: Thomas J. Bonfield - City Manager
Through: W. Bowman Ferguson - Deputy City Manager
From: Marvin G. Williams – Director of Public Works
Subject: Brine Ordinance Revisions (Section 62-16)

Executive Summary

The existing Durham Code of Ordinances Section 62-16 prohibits persons from depositing brine (saltwater) on City streets, sidewalks or other public ways. This amendment would allow City employees or agents to use brine or other substances designed to prevent, reduce, or delay the accumulation of ice on City streets, sidewalks or other public ways as a result of a winter weather event.

Recommendation

The Administration recommends that City Council approve an amendment to the Durham Code of Ordinances Section 62-16.

Background

The application of brine on City streets and sidewalks has been found to be an effective tool to prevent and delay the accumulation of snow and ice on City streets and sidewalks when applied properly before a winter weather event. The Durham Code of Ordinances Section 62-16 currently prohibits anyone from depositing brine and other substances on City streets and sidewalks. The prohibition apparently dates to a period when most City streets were paved with dirt and gravel rather than concrete or asphalt. This amendment would allow City employees or agents to responsibly use brine or other deicing products within the City to mitigate the danger of accidents and injuries posed by the accumulation of ice on City streets and sidewalks as a result of a winter weather event.

Issues and Analysis

The use of brine is a very effective tool when it comes to combating a winter weather snow and ice event. The practice calls for spraying a thin layer of liquid brine on the road before any precipitation falls. When this liquid evaporates, it leaves behind a thin a layer of salt crystals on the asphalt. This thin layer of salt can prevent and will delay the formation of ice on the road surface. It can also make it easier to clear the roads mechanically during larger winter weather events. The use of brine can also result in lower winter weather operations cost as its use may reduce the amount of rock salt (sodium chloride) ordinarily applied to the streets.

The subject ordinance amendment would also allow City employees or agents to use other cost effective, environmentally safe deicing products to prevent and or reduce the amount of ice on City streets and sidewalks as the result of a winter weather event.

Alternatives

City Council could choose not to amend the current Durham Code of Ordinances. If so, this would reduce the City's ability to respond to a winter weather event. This could result in slower response times for fire and police emergencies and extend the negative impact of iced streets on the delivery of City services. This would also result in a longer recovery period for the City and its residents.

Financial Impact

No significant financial impact is anticipated.

SDBE Summary

Not applicable.

Attachments

1. Durham Code of Ordinances Section 62-16.
2. Durham Code of Ordinances Section 62-16 proposed amendment.